

## The Package            Alan Swann

This is a true story although most of the facts have been changed in order to create a little bit of interest for the reader.

"The telly is on the blink' shouts the wife as I arrive home from my golfing session.

"What's the problem?" I enquire with some trepidation based on past experiences of pressing an array of buttons on a range of handsets in attempts to resolve previous problems.

The technical issues surrounding our television have been a challenge for us ever since we combined an independent sound system with the Sky Box which both support our 'Smart' tv. But in the interest of spending money, arguably unnecessarily, we have sought to try to make our tv watching time more pleasurable.

"Ok we need to turn everything off and turn it all on again", I suggest with fingers crossed but a total lack of confidence in this option.

"I've tried that and it looks as though the Sky Box is alive and the sound is coming through but the tv is dead to the world. No picture, lights or anything."

The truth is that the tv is around ten years old and according to my Google search that's a good life for a Smart tv. So we've probably had our money's worth but just to check I carry out a cursory review by unplugging everything and checking for signs of life. Nothing happens and I can pronounce the unit beyond recall. This is a dead tv. So what shall we do?

'Looks like we will have to get the Visa out again and order a new one", says my wife, and the old one will have to be scrapped as they don't seem repairable" ....built in obsolescence' methinks.

This is a fact of life these days, as, whilst much of our electronic equipment does an excellent job for us, unless it is covered by guarantee, it is usually not an economically viable prospect to seek a repair.

Ok, so we accept the inevitable and I get out the laptop and call up the internet and search for 'Large Screen Smart Televisions'. Plenty to choose from, including top brands with five year guarantees. We choose one which looks to fit the bill with an updated specification similar to the current model being replaced. I take a deep breath and put it into the virtual online basket and press 'Pay'. Job done.

However, once the financial pain has been accounted for, that is the easy part. What to do with the dead tv is more of a headache. No part exchange, obviously, and there is no market out there for non working smart televisions and there is no spare parts interest. We will have to take it to the Dumpit site but after taking a few measurements I realise it won't fit in the car.

"Can we ask the Council to collect it for us?", suggests my wife. "Yes but they will charge £40", I explain after checking the Council website.

So we decide to come back to that question when we have had a chance to ask others for ideas.

Two days later an Amazon van pulls up outside our front gate and the driver unloads our nicely packaged new purchase onto a sack barrow and walks carefully up our garden path. He stands the giant box against the house wall and rings the doorbell.

"Just leave it here in the storm porch, please pal", I say as I sign his sheet. "We just need to sort the room furniture out before we can place the set into its new position", I explain. He does as asked and proceeds to take a photograph with me standing beside our new acquisition.

"You don't want to leave it there too long" our neighbour Tony shouts as he walks past. "Some thieves are going round pinching packages off doorsteps you know". " So I gather", I reply.

Tony is correct and our neighbourhood seems to be blighted with the doorstep theft of parcels left by Amazon and other delivery companies. We've not had that experience yet and hopefully we take enough precautions to avoid such problems but nothing is certain in these times.

We work moving things around in the living room and finally feel comfortable that things are where we want them.

"Right, let's see how things go then."

It's dusk and the doorbell rings. My wife gets up to answer the door. "Hello Tony", I hear her saying.

"I told Alan not to leave that big package on the doorstep and I've just seen a white van stop with two guys jumping out, running down your drive and taking off with it. I assume it was a tv."

"Yes you are correct in that it was a tv", she explains smiling. "We had our new tv delivered this morning and we were just watching it in the living room when you rang the door bell."

"Well it took two of those guys to carry it, so it was more than just an empty box that they took."

"Yes", my wife explains with a broad beam across her face. "We put the old broken tv into the new box and left it on the porch. It's such a shame that someone thinks that they have a new tv for free. I just hope that they can get it to work. If not, I hope that they dispose of it carefully."

So we have just saved £40 having the old tv removed from our porch and that's one less package we have to worry about.